



Aruba: The island of Aloes

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Why hundreds of couples chose “May the 4th” to say “I do”

Across the United States this morning, traditional wedding marches were replaced by the triumphant horns of John Williams’ iconic score. From the neon-lit chapels of Las Vegas to the historic steps of the Flagler County Courthouse in Florida, hundreds of couples chose May 4th known globally as Star Wars Day to exchange vows and pledge their lives to one another. What was once a niche “pun” holiday has officially evolved into one of the most sought-after wedding dates on the calendar, proving that for modern couples, the “Force” of love is stronger than tradition.

The phenomenon of the “May the 4th” wedding represents more than just a love for science fiction; it highlights a growing trend in the American wedding industry toward personalization, joy, and shared passions. At the Flagler County Courthouse, Clerk of Court Tom Bexley hosted a special mass-wedding event where the atmosphere was



less “solemn ceremony” and more “intergalactic celebration.” Couples arrived dressed in everything from formal tuxedos with hidden lightsaber cufflinks to full-scale Jedi robes and Mandalorian armor.

“We wanted something that reflected who we

are,” said Sarah Miller, who married her partner, James, while wearing a white gown paired with Princess Leia’s signature braided buns. “Life can be heavy and news can be tough. Why not start our marriage with something that makes everyone in the room smile?”

The scene at Flagler was mirrored in cities like San Francisco, Chicago, and Orlando. In many jurisdictions, judicial officers and clerks leaned into the theme, occasionally swapping their traditional black robes for dark brown Jedi cloaks. Even the legal language saw a playful shift, with some officiants concluding ceremonies with the phrase, “By the power vested in me, and by the strength of the Force, I now pronounce you husband and wife.”

But why has this specific date become such a cultural juggernaut for couples? According to wedding planners, the appeal lies in the narrative of the Star Wars universe itself: a classic story of hope, the triumph of light over darkness, and the idea that even in a vast, chaotic galaxy, two people can find where they belong. In a world that often feels divided, these ceremonies serve as a reminder of the unifying power of shared stories.

“It’s about community,” explains Dr. Aris Thorne, a pop-culture historian. “When you get married on May 4th, you aren’t just celebrating your own union; you are joining a global community of people who value imagination and

heroism. It’s a way to make a very serious life commitment feel approachable and joyous.”

The economic impact of the holiday is also significant. Local bakeries have reported a surge in orders for “Galaxy-themed” cakes, often featuring edible glitter and silhouettes of the Millennium Falcon. Florists are getting creative with “Kyber crystal” accents in bouquets, and photographers are perfecting their “long-exposure” shots to make plastic lightsabers look like they are humming with energy in wedding portraits.

Beyond the costumes and the spectacle, however, the heart of these stories remains grounded in human connection. In Florida, one couple shared that they had bonded over the films during a difficult period in their lives. For them, the Star Wars theme wasn’t a gimmick; it was a tribute to the hobby that brought them together when they needed a distraction from the world.

As the sun sets on May 4th, 2026, the social media feeds of the nation are flooded not with images of conflict, but with photos of “Droid Bearers” carrying rings and “Saber Arches” held high over grinning newlyweds. These “Galactic Weddings” remind us that the best way to face the future whether it’s in a galaxy far, far away or right here at home is with a partner by your side and a sense of wonder in your heart.

As the Clerk in Flagler County noted while signing the final marriage license of the day: “People are looking for reasons to be happy. If a wookiee as a best man brings a smile to a hundred faces, then today was a massive success.”

For the hundreds of newly-minted spouses embarking on their new journey tonight, the message is clear: the quest for happiness is the greatest adventure of all. May the Force be with them, always. □



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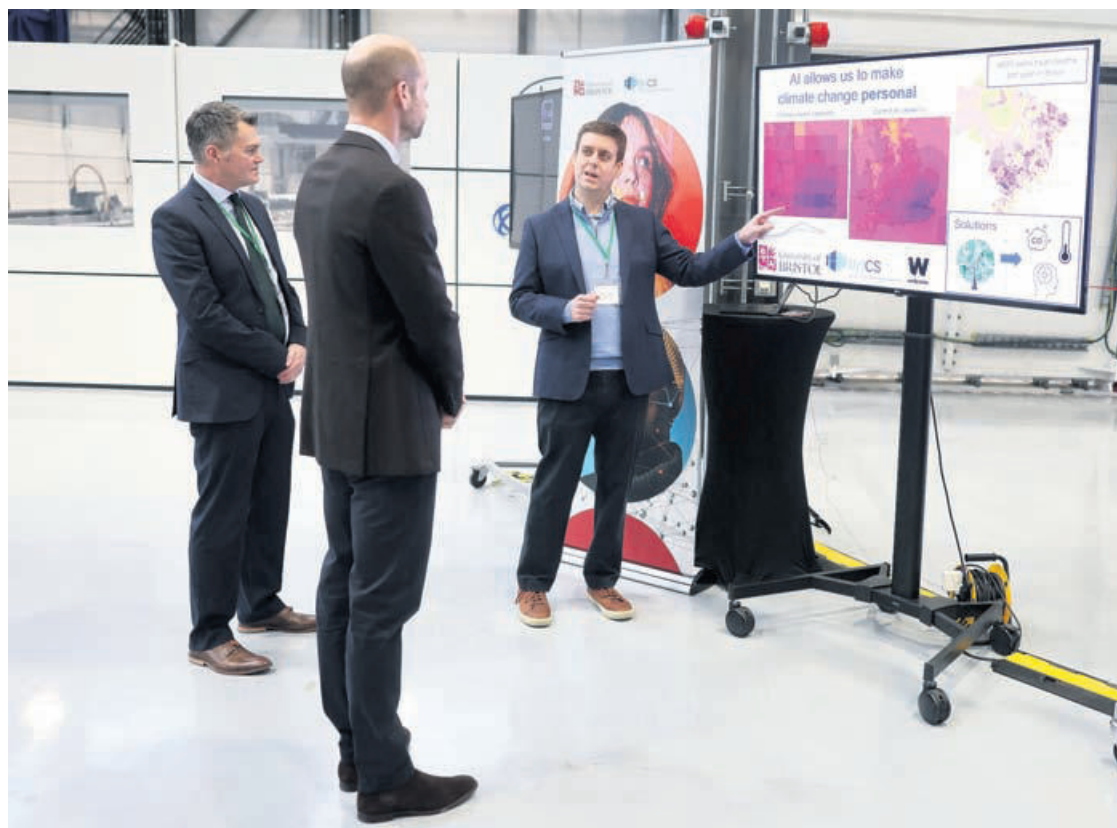
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A spark of hope: Cleveland researchers discover potential path to reversing Alzheimer's

For over a century, a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease has been widely regarded by the medical community and families alike as an irreversible, one-way street. However, a groundbreaking study published in late December 2025 by a collaborative team in Cleveland is challenging that long-held dogma, offering the first tangible "proof of principle" that the brain's decline might not be permanent.

Researchers from Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals, and the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center have identified a critical biological failure at the heart of the disease: a dramatic drop in a cellular energy molecule known as NAD⁺. By restoring the balance of this molecule using an experimental drug, the team successfully reversed advanced Alzheimer's pathology and fully restored cognitive function in animal models.

The energy crisis in the brain The study, led by Dr. Kalyani Chaubey and senior author Dr. Andrew Pieper, reveals that while NAD⁺



Britain's Prince William, Prince of Wales listens to a scientist during a visit to Isambard-AI, the UK's most powerful supercomputer, who are exploring how the supercomputer can help develop new drugs to combat heart disease and Alzheimer's as well as predicting extreme weather, during a visit to the University of Bristol in the city of Bristol, south-west England, on January 22, 2026.

levels naturally decline as we age, this depletion is significantly more severe in brains afflicted by Alzheimer's. NAD⁺ acts as a "metabolic currency," essential for DNA repair and maintaining the energy balance required for neurons to survive.

"When NAD⁺ falls below

necessary levels, cells cannot effectively perform essential maintenance and survival functions," Dr. Pieper explained. This energy failure makes the brain vulnerable to the toxic buildup of amyloid plaques and tau tangles, the hallmark "corrosion" of the disease.

From prevention to recovery

In experiments utilizing two distinct mouse modelsone mimicking amyloid issues and the other focusing on tau protein the researchers introduced a compound called P7C3-A20. Unlike standard over-the-counter supplements that can push

NAD⁺ to potentially unsafe levels, this pharmacological agent helps cells maintain a healthy balance under stress without driving them into dangerous territory.

The results were described as "striking" by the team. Not only did the treatment block the onset of the disease in younger mice, but it also repaired structural damage and fully restored memory and learning in mice with advanced conditions. Notably, this recovery occurred even without directly targeting the amyloid plaques that most current drugs focus on.

Cautious optimism for the future

While the scientific community is heralded this as a "big step forward," experts urge cautious optimism. Because the results have currently only been observed in animal models, they do not yet guarantee the same outcome for human patients.

"Alzheimer's is a complex, multifactorial, uniquely human disease," noted Dr. Pieper, emphasizing that human clinical trials are the critical next step. □

The secret garden under the solar panels: How green energy is saving rare wildflowers

For decades, the expansion of solar energy was often viewed as a zero-sum game for conservation. To build a massive solar farm, developers frequently cleared thousands of rolling acres, displacing native flora and fauna in the name of carbon neutrality. But in the arid landscapes of the American West and the sun-drenched plains of the Midwest, a surprising ecological phenomenon is turning that narrative on its head. Solar farms are becoming accidental sanctuaries for some of the country's rarest plants.

Take, for instance, the three-corner milkvetch.

This delicate, spindly legume with its translucent seed pods is a federally protected species that struggles to survive in the blistering heat of the Nevada desert. Typically, the milkvetch is at the mercy of a changing climate intense droughts and soaring temperatures that evaporate every drop of morning dew. However, researchers have discovered that inside the fenced-off perimeter of a nearby utility-scale solar array, the milkvetch isn't just surviving; it is thriving.

The secret lies in the "shaded microclimate" created by the thousands of photo-

voltaic panels. In the wild, these plants are scorched by twelve hours of direct, relentless sun. Beneath the panels, however, they enjoy a shifting mosaic of shade. This cooling effect slows the evaporation of moisture from the soil, keeping the ground damp long after the surrounding open desert has turned to dust.

"We used to think of solar farms as industrial dead zones," says Dr. Elena Vasquez, a conservation biologist who has been monitoring the site. "But what we're seeing is a form of 'techno-ecological synergy.' The panels act like a

mechanical canopy, mimicking the role that large trees or rock formations might play in a natural ecosystem. They provide a refuge from the extreme heat."

The phenomenon isn't lim-

ited to the desert. In states like Minnesota and Oregon, "pollinator-friendly" solar mandates are transforming the land beneath the panels into vibrant wildflower meadows. □



A rare desert plant in Nevada called three-corner milkvetch.

Stars set for Met Gala, fashion's biggest night

New York, United States

The brightest stars in Hollywood, music, sports and style will hit the red carpet Monday for the Met Gala, the extravagant Manhattan charity ball that this year spotlights the intersection between fashion and art.

The A-listers invited to New York's biggest social event of the year have been asked to dress for the theme "Fashion is Art," which dovetails with the exhibit "Costume Art" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute.

This year's function has drawn controversy after Amazon boss Jeff Bezos and his wife Lauren Sanchez Bezos were announced as the lead sponsors and honorary co-chairs of the gala, with some activists upset about the billionaire couple's involvement. But for the fashionistas, the Met Gala traditionally held on the first Monday in May is simply one of the world's top red carpets with blinding star power.

- Tastemakers -

Music mega-star Beyonce will make her first appearance at the event in a decade, serving as a co-chair of fashion's marquee event along with tennis legend



(L/R) US tennis player Venus Williams and husband Andrea Preti arrive for the press preview of the 2026 Met Gala celebrating "Costume Art" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City on May 4, 2026.

Venus Williams and Oscar-winning actress Nicole Kidman.

The Met also announced a gala "host committee" led by Saint Laurent designer Anthony Vaccarello and actress Zoe Kravitz. It features singers Sabrina Carpenter and Doja Cat, retired ballet superstar Misty Copeland, and WNBA champion A'ja Wilson.

Of course, the entire evening is overseen by Vogue's global editorial director Anna Wintour -- the

ultimate tastemaker in US fashion who has helmed the event for 30 years.

The gala is a fundraiser for the Met's Costume Institute, and this year has raised a record \$42 million (after \$31 million in 2025), the museum's CEO Max Hollein told reporters early Monday.

But it is also a social media extravaganza that sees stars don over-the-top looks, vying to create the greatest spectacle.

Last year's event show-

cased the subversive style of Black dandyism, and was a rare Met Gala spotlighting men and male fashion.

This year's exhibit juxtaposes elegant fashion looks with paintings and sculpture: think a Saint Laurent design next to Van Gogh's "Irises", or a John Galliano gown for Maison Margiela paired with an antique statue.

"When I think about the show, if there's one word to describe it, I suppose it

would be equitability or equivalency, equivalency between artworks," the Costume Institute's curator Andrew Bolton told AFP.

"So there's no hierarchy between sculpture, painting, fashion, photography and no hierarchy between bodies, between the classical body or the disabled body."

- 'Genuinely care' -

In the run-up to Monday, a campaign opposing the involvement of Bezos and his wife cropped up in New York's streets and subways, with some calling for a boycott of an event some see as a gross display of immense wealth.

Behind the campaign is a group founded in Britain called "Everyone Hates Elon" which, a spokesperson stressed, "targets other billionaires" beyond Elon Musk, the world's richest person.

Wintour said Monday that the couple had "shown with this event that they genuinely, genuinely care about giving back."

The Met Gala was first organized in 1948 and for decades was reserved for New York high society -- until Wintour transformed the party into a high-profile catwalk for the rich and famous in the 1990s. □

Netflix announces theatrical release for new 'Narnia' in 2027

Los Angeles, United States

Netflix has said it will release a film globally in theaters nearly two months before it hits the streaming service a first for the content platform.

"Narnia: The Magician's Nephew" will debut on the big screen on February 12 and arrive on television on April 2, the company said in a statement.

The platform had initially planned to release the production in IMAX this November a month before it landed on the streaming service.

Netflix, whose business model relies on continuous at-home viewing, has previously released films on the big screen.

Last year, "K-Pop Demon Hunters" which won two Oscars enjoyed a success-

ful theatrical run in select cinemas two months after its premiere on the plat-

form.

Amid industry concerns sparked by its interest in acquiring Warner Bros. Discovery, Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos stated he was willing to honor the 45-day theatrical window that the storied studio had traditionally reserved.

In March, after Netflix withdrew from a bidding war with Paramount, Sarandos met with theater owners in a meeting that yielded nothing concrete, but was applauded as "constructive."

"Narnia: The Magician's Nephew" is an adaptation of the novel "The Magician's Nephew" by C.S. Lewis, first published in

1955. The film is directed by Greta Gerwig, who also oversaw the smash hits "Barbie" and "Little Women," and welcomed Netflix's scheduling decision.

"Working with Netflix to bring this film to life has been extraordinary and IMAX continues to be an incredible partner," she said in a statement.

"I cannot wait for people to see the film in theaters on February 12 and on Netflix on April 2," she added. Young actors David McKenna ("Lord of the Flies") and Beatrice Campbell lead the cast of the film, which also features Emma Mackey, Carey Mulligan, Daniel Craig, and Meryl Streep. □



(L-R) Jiao Chen, Director of Film at Netflix, and Olivia Newman attend Netflix's Los Angeles Premiere of "Remarkably Bright Creatures" in Hollywood at Netflix Tudum Theater on April 30, 2026 in Los Angeles, California.

Soviet architecture vanishes as Central Asia drifts from Moscow

Dushanbe, Tajikistan
On the facade of an apartment block in Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe, a giant mosaic depicting cosmonauts and engineers celebrates the scientific triumphs of the Soviet Union.

Like so many other relics of the Soviet past in Central Asia, it is doomed to vanish amid a distancing from Russia and a top-down drive to boost national culture.

"If we could only carefully remove it and put it on the building that will be built here. That would be good," said Rakhmon Satiev, who lives in the apartment.

His wish will not come true. The block is about to be demolished to make way for a gleaming new residential complex, and the mosaic is to be torn down.

Over the past decade, Central Asia has shown little interest in preserving its Soviet heritage. Architectural landmarks and art, including mosaics, frescoes and sculptures, have been rapidly demolished.

"If a building is old and does not fit into the new city plan, it is torn down. The city is being rebuilt and renovated, and the past is vanishing," Dzhamshe Dzhuraev, a mosaic artist in Tajikistan, told AFP.



A giant mosaic depicting cosmonauts and engineers and celebrating the scientific triumphs of the Soviet Union sits on the facade of an apartment block in Tajikistan's capital of Dushanbe on March 20, 2026.

Hidden from view in the courtyard behind his studio stands a monument to Vladimir Lenin, the founder of the USSR an awkward reminder of an era that no longer fits with the times.

- 'No longer necessary' -

The five Central Asian former Soviet republics Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan became independent with the collapse of the Soviet Union 35 years ago.

Their urban landscapes have since turned into a

chaotic mix of new high-rises, Stalin-era neoclassicism, dilapidated shacks and stalled construction sites.

Altynai Kudaibergenova, a co-founder of Artkana, a rare initiative group working to preserve Kyrgyzstan's architectural heritage, said the number of lost monuments was "striking". She fears for the visual future of the capital Bishkek, which still has "magnificent examples of socialist-modernist architecture".

The style is popular on social media, particularly among

tourists.

This architectural overhaul is being driven by ideology, which leaves no space for Soviet remnants.

The region's largely unchallenged leaders brand themselves as the founders of a new era and are cementing their own legacies with fresh symbols of power.

Few say outright that is what's going on.

Still economically dependent on Russia even as China muscles into the region officials frame the demoli-

tion drive as cost-efficient. They say renovating crumbling Soviet-era buildings is more expensive than starting from scratch, and that the region urgently needs more housing for its rapidly growing population of some 80 million.

In the Tajik capital Dushanbe, the mayor -- the son of the president -- "is doing everything possible to make the buildings as beautiful and comfortable as he can," prominent Tajik sculptor Safarbek Kosimov told AFP.

Soviet-era mosaics were "no longer necessary," he added.

There are no such qualms about portraits of 73-year-old strongman leader Emomali Rakhmon which have replaced many of the torn-down facades.

- Ideological art -

Critics lament the campaign.

"Most Soviet mosaics were designed to convey an ideological message, but their artistic value is also important," activist Kudaibergenova said.

"Unfortunately, businesses are rarely receptive to such considerations. Their main priority is selling square metres at a high price." □

Famed cartoonist Chappatte calls medium a 'barometer' of freedom

Geneva, Switzerland

Celebrated Swiss political cartoonist Patrick Chappatte, whose work has appeared in The New York Times, Der Spiegel and other leading newspapers, said Monday his profession is on the "front line" of a battle for democracy.

"If you want to know the state of democracy in any nation in the world, just look at how satirists and cartoonists are treated," he told AFP at the opening of an exhibition in Geneva celebrating political cartooning worldwide.

"Autocrats detest ridicule and satire. So press cartoonists are on the front line," said Chappatte, who

heads the Freedom Cartoonists Foundation.

At the exhibition, sponsored by Nobel prize-winning US economist Joseph Stiglitz, the foundation awarded its "courage in cartooning" prize to two artists who Chappatte said are "risking their lives" to do their work: Palestinian Safaa Odah and Ugandan Jimmy "Spire" Ssentongo.

Odah, a displaced woman living in the Khan Yunis refugee camp, makes drawings depicting the daily difficulties of life for Palestinians under Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza.

She draws with whatever materials she can find -- her family's plastic tent,

for example and posts her work on social media.

Ssentongo, an academic and self-taught cartoonist, publishes his vitriolic drawings on X, and is regularly targeted with threats, in a country ruled for more than 40 years by President Yoweri Museveni.

"I'm afraid, humanly, knowing that anytime you can be picked up, but it's all about managing that fear," Ssentongo, 47, told AFP at the exhibition, "Cartoons for Freedom", presented at the Quai Wilson gallery on the shores of Lake Geneva.

"The fact that I'm scared is not enough to stop me...

How can you keep quiet? I continue not because I'm not afraid... but just because I have a stronger

push from within. Despite the fear, you have to do something, you have to continue speaking." □



Swiss editorial cartoonist Patrick Chappatte (L) poses with US Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz (R) next to one of his cartoons during a visit to the exhibition "Dessins pour la liberte" titled ("Drawings for Freedom"), held to mark World Press Freedom Day on the shores of Lake Geneva in Geneva on May 4, 2026.

'Our streets aren't bins': Abidjan young people's war on trash

Attécoubé, Ivory Coast

On a street in a working-class neighbourhood in Abidjan, a small group of young people scrubbed rubbish-clogged drains while barefoot children played nearby.

The volunteers have declared war on filth in Ivory Coast, convinced that in order to develop, they need to keep their country clean.

Armed with shovels and brightly coloured rakes, around 10 of them turned out in the Attécoubé area to "set an example", said 22-year-old Mickael Yao, a surgical mask pulled over his nose to cope with the stench.

The densely populated district is part of Greater Abidjan, the country's economic capital of more than six million people.

The fast-growing city produces at least 4,500 tonnes of household waste a day, according to the National Waste Management Agency (Anaged).

A year ago, Yao founded the Clean Street association after what he called a disturbing realisation.

"Most Ivorians throw their rubbish in the street and think it's normal," he told AFP. "Our streets are not



Young volunteers from the association called Clean Street scrub waste-clogged gutters overflowing with trash and other plastics in Attécoubé, popular district of Abidjan on March 22, 2026.

rubbish bins."

Since then, he has gained nationwide attention through his TikTok account, which now has nearly 50,000 followers.

Some of his videos viewed hundreds of thousands of times aim to raise awareness about keeping public spaces clean.

Plastic bottles and bags, fruit peelings, leftovers of fried fish and debris pile up rapidly in drains where water can no longer flow,

sometimes causing dramatic flooding during the rainy season.

As volunteers worked under the blazing sun, passersby watched with curiosity. Before long, neighbourhood youngsters stopped their football match to lend a hand.

But that is not always the case.

"A lot of people make fun of us, asking if we're doing this for money," said Yao, who is currently sitting his

high school exams.

He said the turning point came after travelling to neighbouring Ghana as well as Benin, whose economic capital Cotonou has districts seen as models of cleanliness in west Africa.

"I saw that those countries were clean, so why not us?"

- 'Generation to generation' -

Clean Street now has more than 60 members, mostly young people, who Yao

said were easier to reach as older Ivorians often see being told what to do as "disrespectful".

Once the clean-up ends, volunteers go door to door to talk with residents.

Sitting in the shade outside her home, preparing attiéké, a cassava-based Ivorian staple, 55-year-old Adjaratou Toure said her main concern was the health of children in the area.

"They go into the gutter to fetch their football. Their hands are dirty, then they buy sweets and eat them. That's an infection," she said.

She recalled catching her neighbour dumping a rice casserole into the drain.

"But if you complain, she'll say, 'Who do you think you are?' So to avoid trouble, you let it go," she said.

For many, cleanliness is above all a matter of education.

"From generation to generation, we'll eventually adopt the right habits," said 23-year-old student Betty Goli, Clean Street's secretary-general.

At home, she is not always taken seriously. "They call me the environment minister," she joked.

"But our voice carries further thanks to social media." □

Turkey and Armenia pledge to restore historic border bridge

Ankara, Turkey

Turkey and Armenia on Monday signed an agreement to jointly restore the medieval Ani bridge on their shared border, as part of moves to normalise ties between the two countries.

"We believe that symbolic and concrete areas of cooperation, such as the joint restoration of the Ani bridge which was formalised today by a memorandum of understanding, will help establish a lasting climate of peace and security," said Turkey's Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz.

Yilmaz met Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on the sidelines of the eighth European Political Community summit in Ye-

revan.

Pashinyan wrote on X that he had a "fruitful exchange" with Yilmaz and hailed the bridge restoration deal.

The bridge was built in the 10th century over the Ar-

pacay river, which borders the medieval site of Ani in eastern Turkey, the capital of the former Armenian kingdom.

It had two levels, one for caravans underneath and another above for pedest-

rians.

Only its piers are still standing and visible.

Restoration of the site, which was entered on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2016, is already the subject of scientific cooperation between the two countries.

Yerevan and Ankara have not established diplomatic relations and their land border, which was briefly opened in the early 1990s, remains shut.

The two countries have pursued a cautious rapprochement since the end of 2021 and Azerbaijan's seizure of Karabakh, which saw most of the Armenian population leave.

At the end of last month, they decided to put the

Kars-Gyumri railway line back into service on both sides of the border.

Turkey's national carrier, Turkish Airlines, operated its first direct flight between Istanbul and Yerevan in March.

But the two sides remain divided.

The Armenians say 1.5 million of their people were killed under the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1917 and seek international recognition that it was genocide.

Turkey strongly denies the accusation of genocide and disputes the numbers, saying that the Armenians were among hundreds of thousands of people who died in the turmoil of World War I as the Ottoman Empire disintegrated. □



A woman walks near Tigran Honents Church in Ani ruins near Kars, on February 28, 2024.

Explore Aruba!

(ORANJESTAD)—Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of

70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.

Arikok National Park



The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In total, the park consists of 34 square kilometers of protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whip-tail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are

just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the website www.acf.aw

Natural Bridge

One of Aruba's favorite tourist attractions is the Natural Bridge. For thousands of years, pounding waves and strong winds have slowly chiseled away the limestone cliffs along Aruba's north coast to create several natural bridges. The largest of these bridges used to be the famous Natural Bridge. The bridge was a formation of coral limestone cut out by years of pounding surf, and was one of the largest of these types of spans in the world. It stood some 23 feet (7 meters) above sea level and spans more than 100 feet (30 meters). Unfortunately the bridge collapsed on September 2, 2005. Despite this, it is still the most photographed natural bridge and it remains a popular tourist attraction in Aruba, with the adjacent and intact Baby Bridge also meriting a visit. The Natural Bridge is the perfect stop



while touring Aruba. There is no admission fee or set hours for visiting. Quench your thirst with refreshing beverages & refuel your tank with local snacks.

The Lourdes Grotto

Named in commemoration of the famous French religious landmark, was created under the guidance of a priest named "Erkamp" and parishioners in the year 1958. The grotto, a shrine built into the rocks is located in Seroe Preto, just off the main road to San Nicolas. A statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing 700 kilos, was hoisted into place in the grotto. Every year, on February 11 (feast of Lady of Lourdes), a procession leaves from the St. Theresa church in San Nicolas to the grotto, where a mass is performed. The grotto is located road-side and can be visited daily. Just make sure you park safely in the event you wish to stop for pictures at this location. □

Aruba's kite flying tradition



(Oranjestad)—Every year for King's Day, Arubans gather with friends and family to fly kites. Big or small, paper or plastic, blue skies fill up with these colorful flying contraptions, brightening our yearly celebration of the Dutch Monarch.

The tradition of flying kites starts at home in the weeks leading up to King's Day. These kites were traditionally made with things found in the nearby mondi* and in the kitchen at home. Using dried up cactus sticks for the frame, old news papers, and glue made from flour, water and salt to dry faster (some people even use cornstarch slurry as glue), kids usually make their own kites with their friends, parents or other close family members. Tails are made from old bed sheets, ripped and tied together to create a long string of fabric trailing behind the

back end of the kite. To finish off the process, people used fish lines or thin rope to tie three corners of the kite together. Another long string of rope is tied in the knotted center and bundled up, used to steer the kite as it flies in the air. Decorating the kite was especially important, and children would use paint to create their own designs—the more colorful, the better!

People usually fly their kites in big open fields, like empty soccer and baseball fields found all around the island around noon, when the sun is at its brightest. In the past few years, kite flying has become a sport in which groups of people would battle against each other to see whose kite is the biggest, the prettiest, and whose could fly flawlessly and longer in the air.

*Mondi: Aruban woods. □



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Rooted in Community and Sustainability

What truly sets Casago Aruba apart is their commitment



to the local community and to sustainable practices. The team works closely with local businesses and artisans, promotes eco-conscious travel, and supports initiatives that contribute positively to the island's environment and economy.

As one of the fastest-growing vacation rental and property management companies on the island, Casago Aruba continues to expand its footprint—welcoming more travelers, partnering with more homeowners, and raising the standard of hospitality in Aruba. □

Adriaan Laclé: One of Aruba's richest men in the twentieth century

(Oranjestad)—The name Adriaan Laclé may ring a bell to locals as one of the main roads on the island, but about a century ago, Adri-

aan Laclé was a rich businessman, well-known for his generosity, wealth, and taste.

Adriaan was born in 1866 and

was the eldest of six children. Not much is known about his childhood upbringing or any of his earlier business deals, but during his heyday he often helped people get loans, was a well-established trader, and owned several plots of land. In fact, he commissioned the construction of the famous La Quinta Carmen manor—now a restaurant. Though he himself never lived in the beautiful manor, his own house also reflected his success and good taste. Today his house still stands in good condition and can be

found in the back streets of main street Oranjestad.

Regarding his personal life, it has been said that he was married twice during his lifetime. He had his first daughter during his first marriage but lost his wife soon after her birth. During his second marriage, he fathered 16 children. However, it has been said that only 11 of those 17 made it past 18 years of age. Perhaps two of his most well-known daughters are Maria Monica Laclé and Maria Veneranda Laclé, who went

on to marry successful brothers Eloy Arends and Maximilian Arends, respectively. Their houses are still standing; Eloy and Maria Monica's mansion functions as the townhall, used to host civil marriages, while Maximilian and Maria Veneranda's house stands on the opposite side of the road to them—though currently under renovation after years left in ruin. □

Source: De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba) by Evert Bongers.



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A brief history of the California Light House

(Oranjestad)—At the furthest western point of the island, there lies the tallest structure on the island: The California Light House. Standing on top of a limestone cliff, this lighthouse oversees the entire island, offering one of few best views of the island and the surrounding sea. It is also one of the few monuments that hold a rich history.

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs. Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Lighthouse at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to Westpunt carrying the cargo, poles, cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck.

These things reflect how people could have accomplished this tremendous job with so little." Mr. Fingal said, "At that time, it wasn't a place for people to work. It was very challenging because it was full of goats and donkeys, and it was very isolated. There were no hotels or roads to get there. There was only a donkey trail. Those were the only means of transportation."

Mr. Fingal continues, "In 1939, I was born in the lighthouse, and my father was the last lighthouse keeper until he retired in 1962. After that, they removed the power cables all the way to the top. According to the story, we couldn't have the light ourselves because they dismantled it, and after many years, I heard that it is in a train museum in San Nicolas, where we found this very special lens that, when

the light shines through it, it reaches 30 kilometers out to sea." Mr. Fingal told our reporter.

The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back to the day when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because it was manufactured in France. At that time, there was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr. Fingal said.

Mr. Fingal discovered something very interesting about the lighthouse after much research was documented



in his book 'History of the Lighthouse at Westpunt.' He found many details: "I found out that the height of the lighthouse was due to the absence of electricity. There was also the presence of coral. There is a long steel cable from where the light is, and under the light, at the highest point, there is a hanging weight, a sort of pendulum that swings like that, with a weight that measures about 1 meter by 30 centimeters wide, which is a block of solid iron attached to a cable. When you release it upwards, it comes down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually. And while it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the light shines on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to col-

lapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

Mr. Fingal further explains that in one night, the lighthouse rotates 4,320 times and consumes one gallon of kerosene for the whole operation. "At that time, the kerosene was supplied from the Lago refinery. Every day it was brought down, and to start the light again, they had to lift the weight up, so our job as children was to crank it and raise the weight back up in the evening when the light stuck, they would take it down again, and the light stayed down. That's how it worked for a very long time," Mr. Fingal explains.

Thanks to the Monument Fund Aruba, which worked hard and is currently in charge of the Lighthouse, Mr. Fingal is very happy with its preservation, along with all the renovations that have taken place. He hopes that the story of the lighthouse will continue to live on for future generations. □



Fun facts about the 'Lisinbein'

The 'Lisinbein' (*Scolopendra gigantea*), also known as the **Giant Centipede**, is one of the largest centipedes in the world and is found in Aruba. Its size and hunting prowess make it a fascinating, if often misunderstood, creature.

Despite its fearsome reputation, it plays a crucial ecological role that often goes unnoticed.

As an apex invertebrate predator, *Scolopendra gigantea* helps maintain balance in the ecosystem. Moreover, they themselves are a food source for birds such as the Crested Caracara (Warawara) and the Aruba burrowing owl (Shoco).

It controls populations of smaller invertebrates and

even small vertebrates, ensuring that no species overpopulates, which could disrupt local biodiversity.

Its presence can indicate a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Its sensitivity to environmental changes makes it a bioindicator of ecological balance.

It can reach an impressive length of up to 30 centimeters (approx. 12 inches) and live for around 5 to 10 years in the wild. Its size and longevity makes it a significant and long-term part of the ecosystem.

A mother's love

In *Scolopendra* species, the 'mother' typically exhibits maternal care by curling around her eggs and newly hatched young. She stays

coiled around the clutch, protecting it from predators and fungi, which are serious risks in the moist environments these centipedes often inhabit. The mother maintains a clean environment for the eggs by carefully grooming them, which helps prevent fungal growth that could endanger the brood. This behavior may continue until the young centipedes have undergone their first molt, making them more capable of independent survival.

This form of parental care is beneficial in increasing the survival rates of offspring, as the mother's protection provides a safe 'environment' during their vulnerable developmental stages. It's a fascinating adaptation because it shows a form of care

that resembles more complex behaviors observed in vertebrates.

No bark, but all bite!

The lisinbein is known locally for having a really painful sting. While venomous, the Lisinbein is generally not aggressive toward humans unless provoked. Its role as a guardian of balance in the ecosystem helps protect the natural beauty of Aruba by keeping the ecosystem in



harmony.

Editor's note: Information and pictures provided by Ms. Natasha Silva from the Aruba Conservation Foundation. □

Aruba: The island of Aloes

ORANJESTAD – Aloe Vera, a succulent plant species, is renowned for its incredible properties for the skin. It is widely distributed and usually grows in tropical, semi-tropical and arid climates on the planet. But this plant also had a very prominent role in the history of Aruba, and its significance to the island's economy endures to this day.

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes."

Under Commander Jan Helenus Ferguson (1866-1871), aloe experienced a boom, which is why there is a road named after him, which goes through the aloe fields. In the 19th century, Aruba was the main supplier of aloin for laxative, which was imported abroad to the United States and Europe. The aloin from Aruba and Curaçao was known to be one of the best in the world and was more expensive, which meant that at the time, it had significant economic impact, particularly for the local farmers.

However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

The impact and relevance of aloe is visible all around Aruba. While most homes will have a few plants for personal use and decoration, houses are also decorated with aloe motifs, and at some point, aloe even featured on post stamps. Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes." And in 1955, the aloe became a part of Aruba's coat of arms, symbolizing prosperity for the island. □

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The Bali Restaurant: a touristic hot spot and lost gem on the island

(Oranjestad)—Once located by the yacht dock in front of the Parliament building, the Bali Restaurant was once both a touristic and local hot spot, and nowadays it's considered a forgotten gem on the island.

Known as "the floating restaurant", Bali first opened in 1955 by Willem "Bill" Strijland, who had experience in Javanese cuisine. At the time, the restaurant was pretty exclusive—with space to host only 25 guests. Yet, 4 years later, it was named the best restaurant in the Caribbean by the Caribbean Tourist Association.

The restaurant was probably most iconic for its Javanese-inspired exterior with its pointy, slanted roofs. However, the first version of Bali did not look like that at all but was still considered as one of the most popular restaurants on the island at the time. The restaurant saw



three different owners during its existence, during which it underwent various renovations and rebranding.

In 1964, the restaurant was taken over by Karel "Carl" Schmand. Over the years, the restaurant needed constant renovation and repair, mainly due to its vul-

nerability to leaks and the unstable pillars underneath the foundation. However, the biggest change made to the restaurant happened in the year 1970—still under the ownership of Schmand, when it got its iconic pointy roofs. The restaurant was also expanded to host a total of 85 guests. This was "The New

Bali", who had its official (re) opening in 1972.

After 1972, when Ronny Schmand took over, the restaurant saw yet another expansion; this time complete with a long bar and dance floor, where guests enjoyed live music from legendary Aruban musician and com-

poser, Toti Arends.

After 1989, the restaurant was again handed over to other owners, and since then suffered from unstable pillars underneath the foundation, resulting in various leaks and overflowing of water into the restaurant. And as most great things come to an end, so did the survival and maintenance of the Bali Restaurant. However, folks today reminisce its legacy, and it's now considered a lost monument.

Be a part of the conversation: if you or any family member of yours have a memory of the Bali restaurant, whether it be a picture or just a story, share it with us! We would love to see this legendary hot spot through the lens of our visitors! □

Source and pictures credit to: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers.

Place names in San Nicolas and their origins

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever taking a tour of Aruba, San Nicolas would definitely be on your itinerary. From relaxing on the white, sandy beaches of Baby and Roger's Beach, to exploring the prehistoric caves of Quadirikiri and Fontein, you are taking in a full view of what San Nicolas has to offer. But did you know that you are also passing through areas whose names have historical origins? Here are a few place names in San Nicolas and their origin story.



Sero Colorado

On your way to Baby or Roger's Beach, you'll pass by the famous Red Anchor at what was once the entrance to the Colony residential community and be greeted with red soiled hills by the coast. This is Sero Colorado. Named after the 30-meter, deep red, limestone hill, "Sero Colorado" translates to "Colored Hill". Sero Colorado has deep historical ties with the once-thriving phosphate industry in the area. Matter of fact, there are still underground

shafts and passages deep in Sero Colorado from the time of phosphate mining. In 1958, the refinery at the time, Lago, adopted this name for the residential section of its employees.

Vader Piet

Another well visited area, Vader Piet is located in the Arikok National Park. Recognizable sites within this area include the Wind Mills and the Quadirikiri Cave. The origin of this name is part historical and speculation, as there are slight de-

viations from what actually happened.

In 1829, Pieter Lampe was a planter and the person responsible for governing this remote area. As the story goes, Pieter was well known and beloved for his kindness and good treatment of his employees, and was therefore also called Vader Piet (Father Piet). However, he was tragically murdered—some speculate at the hands of a slave. For his work and good heart, the area was named after him.

San Nicolas

Of course we can't forget San Nicolas itself. Much like Vader Piet, the origin of the name San Nicolas has so far two different accounts. In the literal sense, "San Nicolas" translates to "Saint Nicolas", leading many to believe that this district was named after a Spanish saint. Though one account does support this with the theory that the district was named after the saint by Spanish colonizers, the other account is much

less divine, but does refer to an influential figure in the area.

Nicolaas van der Biest was a successful landowner during the time of the phosphate boom in late 19th century Aruba. Back then, landowners (most, if not all of them men) were referred to as "Shon" by their subordinates. So, the district was originally named after Shon Nicolaas. Over time, the name evolved into what is now San Nicolas. □

Source: "Aruba: Short History" by Dr. J. Hartog



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 38 Come into

1 Barber-shop needs
7 Tater
11 Brewing need
12 Florence's river

13 Blood line

14 Bridge fee

15 Peace goddess

16 Said with a twang

17 Be bold

18 Give

19 Paper pack

21 Quite cold

22 Yeti's cousin

25 Chips buy

26 Take apart

27 Draw out

29 Make lots

33 Costume

34 Jacket flap

35 Seize

36 Harry Potter, for one

37 Pot starter

A	P	A	R	T	W	E	L	D	S
S	O	N	A	R	O	V	E	R	T
S	I	G	M	A	M	E	T	O	O
E	R	E	P	T	A	I	N	K	
S	O	L	P	U	N	T	E	E	
S	T	A	T	E	N	G	I	R	D
	B	A	R	I	S	T	A		
A	R	A	B		S	H	O	W	M
P	O	S	P	I	E	R	A	N	
L	O	S	H	A	L	I	N	C	
O	M	E	G	A		V	I	G	G
M	I	T	E	S		E	T	H	E
B	E	T	T	E		D	E	T	R

DOWN

1 Solemn

2 Caesar's land

3 Critic, at times

4 Starting bids

5 Tiny opening

6 Sow's place

7 "Paradise Lost"

8 Mundane figure

9 Open, as a gate

10 First lady of 1812

16 Wanderer

18 Dismay leader

20 Rig

22 Italian port

23 Stir up

24 Yellow gems

25 Handout seeker

28 Dice, e.g.

30 Set off

31 Brink

32 Church

34 Green hue

36 Soaked

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11						12			
13						14			
15						16			
17						18			
19						20			
21						22			
23						24			
25						26			
27						28			
29						30			
31						32			
33						34			
35						36			
37						38			
39						40			

A X Y D L B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

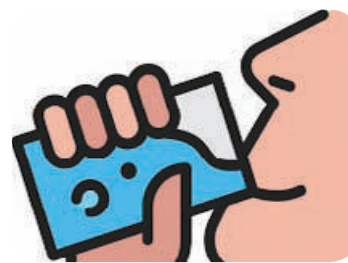
5-20 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

K H B X R N A S K H B M F W N A W A Q
K H B M R D W M X J M D W S W M D
B A F M D Y D Q D A X D Q N A X R D
R N E X H M K H Z X R D T H M P Q,
J B X X R D A K H B M D W Q.
— G W I D E J W P Q T N A

Cryptoquote: YOU'RE NOT A STAR UNTIL THEY CAN SPELL YOUR NAME IN KARACHI. — HUMPHREY BOGART

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

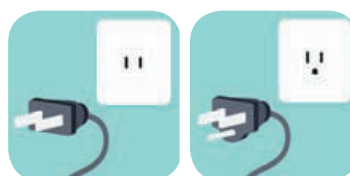
Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

02 SAT	CARIBBEAN PRINCESS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
05 TUE	CELEBRITY SILHOUTTE	Arrival: 08:00 Departure: 17:00 Berth: B
	CARNIVAL MAGIC	Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
06 WED	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 11:59 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
12 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
19 TUE	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C
20 WED	ALLURE OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: I
	CARNIVAL VISTA	Arrival: 7:00 Departure: 16:00 Berth: C
21 THU	CARNIVAL VENEZIA	Arrival: 9:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: C
26 TUE	CARNIVAL HORIZON	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 22:00 Berth: B
	GRANDEUR OF THE SEAS	Arrival: 8:00 Departure: 23:00 Berth: C

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

				7				
		1		3	4		5	7
				9	6	1	2	3
		6		9	2			
8	3	2		4	6	7	9	
5				1			2	
	1		4		3	9	8	
3	5			8				2
2				5	7		1	

Difficulty: ★

5/4

Answer to previous puzzle

5	7	2	8	3	6	1	9	4
3	9	8	1	4	5	7	6	2
6	1	4	2	7	9	3	5	8
2	6	7	9	1	4	5	8	3
9	8	3	5	6	7	2	4	1
4	5	1	3	2	8	6	7	9
7	3	6	4	8	1	9	2	5
8	2	5	6	9	3	4	1	7
1	4	9	7	5	2	8	3	6

Difficulty: ★★★★★

5/3

Mysterious world beyond Pluto may have an atmosphere: astronomers

Paris, France

A tiny, little-known world beyond Pluto appears to have an atmosphere, Japanese astronomers said Monday, defying what had been thought possible for icy objects in our cosmic backyard.

If confirmed, the roughly 500-kilometre-wide (310-mile) rock would become just the second world past Neptune in our Solar System to host an atmosphere after only Pluto itself.

Formerly classified as a planet, Pluto was demoted to dwarf planet status in 2006, in part because astronomers were discovering other similar objects in a distant region called the Kuiper Belt.

While NASA under US President Donald Trump has floated the idea of restoring Pluto's planet status, the discovery of another atmosphere nearby could undermine the argument for its reinstatement.

For the new discovery, Japanese researchers and an amateur astronomer pointed their telescopes at an object with the unwieldy name of (612533) 2002 XV93.

The icy world is nearly 40 times further from the Sun than Earth -- or roughly six billion kilometres away. These dark objects can only be seen when they pass in front of a distant star.

When this happened in January 2024, the astronomers observed that the starlight did not immediately reappear, suggesting a thin atmosphere was filtering some of the light. They estimate that the world has an atmosphere five to 10 million times thinner than Earth's, according to a new study in Nature Astronomy.

"This is important because, until now, Pluto was the only trans-Neptunian object with a confirmed atmosphere," lead study author Ko Arimatsu of the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan told AFP. Such small worlds had not been thought capable of



This undated handout artist's impression released on May 4, 2026 shows the trans-Neptunian object (612533) 2002 XV93 occulting a background star as observations of a stellar occultation in January 2024 revealed gradual fading and recovery of the starlight, providing evidence for a very thin atmosphere around the object.

hosting an atmosphere.

"This discovery therefore challenges the conventional view that small icy worlds in the outer Solar System are mostly inactive and unchanging," he added.

- Ice volcanoes or comet smash? -

The researchers could not say for sure what created the atmosphere, which is nowhere near thick enough to support life.

But they suggested it could have been made by gas being shot out from the world's interior by erupting ice volcanoes.

Or it could have been kicked up by a comet smashing into the world,

which would mean it will gradually disappear.

Jose-Luis Ortiz, a Spanish astronomer not involved in the research who studies dwarf planets beyond Neptune, said the results were interesting, but urged caution.

"I still doubt that it is an atmosphere. We need more data," he told AFP.

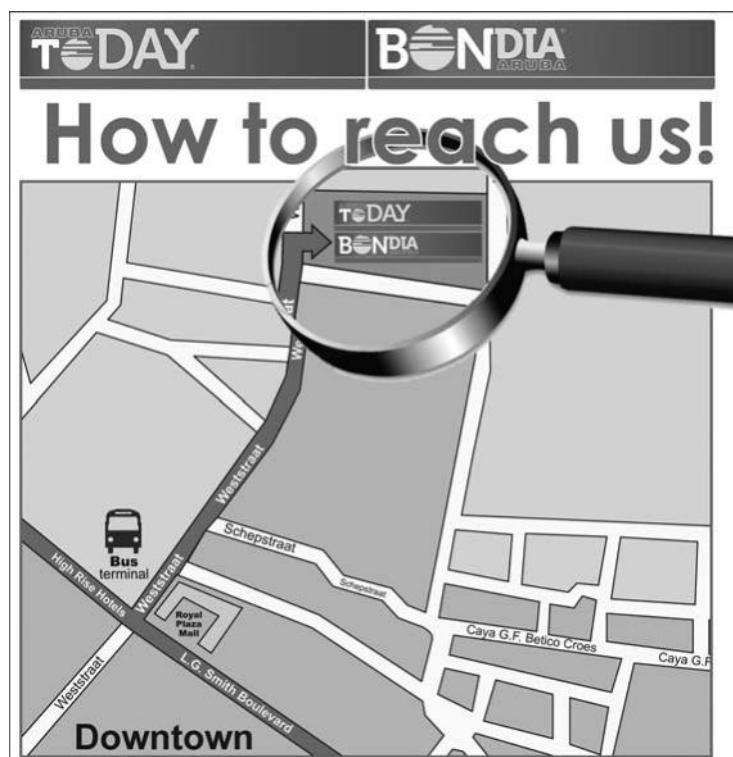
An alternative explanation for the observations could be that the object has a ring close to its body, Ortiz said.

Ko Arimatsu acknowledged that he could not rule out "exotic alternatives" to an atmosphere.

However, "a nearly edge-on ring does not seem con-

sistent with the main features of our observations," he added.

Both astronomers called for further observations to reveal more about this strange world particularly with the James Webb space telescope.



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Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989
Against Domestic Violence(FCVR)
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Centre for Diabetes
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Tel. 582 4433
Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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OpenAI co-founder under fire in Musk trial over \$30B stake

Oakland, United States

Following high-profile testimony from billionaire Elon Musk last week, one of OpenAI's co-founders testified Monday in the California lawsuit brought by the world's richest man against the creators of ChatGPT. Musk's lawyers called Greg Brockman to the stand in an effort to show the jury that OpenAI's founders manipulated their original benefactor to transform a philanthropic mission into a money-making enterprise worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

Musk is seeking to force his rivals to revert to a purely non-profit foundation. The outcome of the case could shape the future of OpenAI, the fast-rising generative AI giant now valued at over \$850 billion and preparing for an IPO. OpenAI CEO and co-founder Sam Altman, who in 10 years has gone from being Musk's protege to a bitter rival, is not expected to take the stand until the week of May 11. On Monday, it was his closest ally, Brockman, who sat in the witness chair at the Oakland courthouse near San Francisco, with Altman looking on. From the outset, Musk's attorney Steven Molo got the visibly tense 38-year-old engineer to acknowledge that he holds a stake in



OpenAI President Gregory Brockman departs court at the Ronald V. Dellums Federal Building on April 30, 2026 in Oakland, California. Elon Musk invested in OpenAI early on believing it would be a non-profit, but is now suing OpenAI and its CEO Sam Altman for allegedly deceiving him by developing OpenAI into a for-profit company.

OpenAI now valued at \$30 billion, without having invested anything himself.

Molo brandished a 2015 email in which the OpenAI co-founder had pledged to donate \$100,000 to help attract other Silicon Valley donors.

"I did not end up donating, that's true," Brockman conceded.

AI "is going to be the most important technological shift in human history...This is really about humanity as a whole," Brockman told the court, insisting that OpenAI's commercial pivot re-

mained faithful to its original philanthropic mission. He argued that the company had not plundered the non-profit foundation to which OpenAI is still attached.

"We have created the most well-resourced non-profit in history, with over \$150 billion worth of equity value," he said.

Over three days of testimony last week, Musk portrayed himself as a selfless early supporter of OpenAI, saying he contributed \$38 million between 2016 and 2020 before being sidelined.

The head of SpaceX and Tesla argued that he wanted to counterbalance Google's dominance and ensure that transformative AI technology remains free from profit-driven pressures.

- 'Most hated men' -

OpenAI's legal team asked the judge late Sunday to allow Brockman to show the jury a message allegedly sent by Musk on the eve of the trial, following a failed proposal to settle the case outside of court.

According to the request, which was seen by AFP, Musk said: "By the end of

this week, you and Sam will be the most hated men in America. If you insist, so it will be."

The judge denied the request, ruling that the issue should have been raised while Musk was still on the stand.

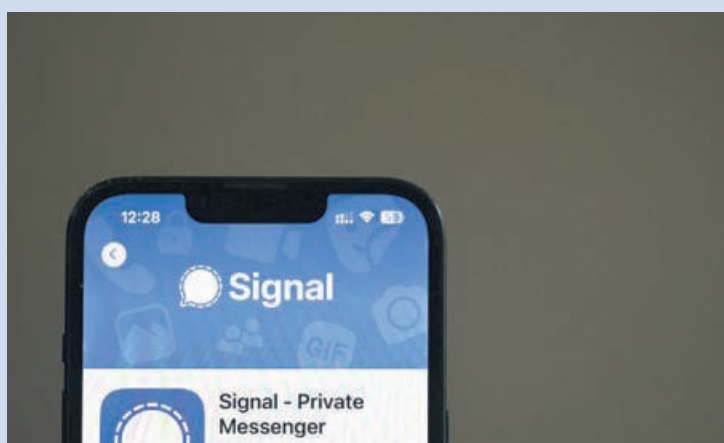
OpenAI's lawyers have sought to convince the jury that the billionaire is using the courts for personal revenge and to slow down a competitor, having launched his own AI lab, xAI, in 2023 and its chatbot Grok.

Musk recently folded xAI into SpaceX, which is reportedly valued at about \$1.25 trillion and may also pursue a public offering.

Last week, Musk a major Trump donor who was seen diligently taking handwritten notes did not miss a moment of the proceedings.

- Global competition -

The stakes are high. If Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers who will make the final ruling after hearing the jury's opinion ultimately sides with Musk, OpenAI's IPO could be jeopardized. That could reshape the global AI landscape, where major players like Google and Chinese tech firms are competing aggressively. OpenAI is also facing growing competition from Anthropic and its Claude model. □



An illustration photograph taken on April 17, the Signal messaging app displayed on a phone screen, in a residential property in Guildford, south of London.

Washington, United States

Signal, an end-to-end encrypted messaging app long considered one of the most secure in the world, has recently faced attacks from hackers accused of

links to Russia.

Top German officials on Saturday blamed Moscow-backed groups for phishing attacks targeting senior politicians on the messaging app, raising

What is Signal and is it secure?

questions about how secure Signal really is. Similar phishing cases have been reported by Dutch and American users, with Google in February sounding the alarm over cyberattacks from Russia-aligned groups.

But what makes Signal different from other messaging apps, and how could one of the world's most secure messaging apps be so widely targeted?

- How does it work? -

Signal's end-to-end encryption means that any sent message travels in a scrambled form and can only be deciphered by the

end user.

Nobody in between not the company providing the service, not the internet provider, nor hackers intercepting the message can read the content because they don't have the keys to unlock it.

Signal is not the only messaging service to do this, but unlike WhatsApp and Apple's iMessage, the app is controlled by an independent non-profit not a big tech behemoth motivated by revenue. That has won it more trust with those concerned about privacy.

Signal also goes further than WhatsApp on data

privacy, making metadata such as when the message was delivered and its recipient invisible even to the company itself.

And WhatsApp shares information with its parent company Meta and third parties, including phone numbers, mobile device information, and IP addresses.

For these reasons, Signal has long been a go-to messaging service for users particularly concerned about communications secrecy, such as people working in security professions, journalists, and their sources. □

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Race winner Mercedes' Italian driver Kimi Antonelli holds the trophy as he celebrates on the podium after the 2026 Miami Formula One Grand Prix at Miami International Autodrome in Miami Gardens, Florida, on May 3, 2026.

Three things we learned from the Miami Grand Prix

Miami, United States

Kimi Antonelli proved that age is no barrier and that he is on track to becoming a Formula One great with his stunning third straight career win.

At just 19, he became the first Italian to win three races in succession since Alberto Ascari in 1952 and will head to Montreal with a 20-point lead as the youngest leader of the drivers' championship in F1 history. AFP looks at three things we learned from Sunday's race:

- Real deal Antonelli -

Few paddock regulars were ready for this and many were dismissive of claims, emanating from Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff, that Antonelli was a generational talent. But his hard-earned win, under pressure from McLaren's world champion Lando Norris, ended those doubts.

By becoming the first driver to turn his first three consec-

utive poles into victories, after another almost-trade-mark poor start, Antonelli has stirred the passions of his peers and the expectations of Italy's motor racing fans.

His team-mate George Russell, nine years his senior and in his eighth F1 season, was a hot pre-season title favourite and won the opening race, but has since been unable to establish his authority. For Wolff, torn between joyous celebration and cold management-speak, it is a welcome dilemma as Mercedes sit atop the constructors' title race and plan a major upgrade package in Canada.

"It's astounding, these few races," said Wolff.

"In a way, it's what we predicted as a team to have ups and downs last season, with moments of brilliance, but moments too when you want to tear your hair out.

"But this year, it's coming together and I don't think

anyone expected this. He has monetised on it every single weekend and it's special. It's his best race so far and reminds me of his karting days.

"It is easier to calm someone down that is wild because you won't be able to accelerate a donkey."

Wolff's decision to fast-track Antonelli into Mercedes in 2024, before he had passed his normal road car driving test, raised eyebrows. On Sunday night, he placed him alongside tennis star Jannik Sinner in Italy's sporting galaxy.

"The easiest bit is making sure that he keeps both feet on the ground within the team - his parents have done a great job," said Wolff.

"The bigger problem is the Italian public.

"Now that they are not qualified for the football World Cup, it is all about Sinner and Antonelli. It is the two superstars and that is something that we need to contain." □

Dutch federation avoids 'chaos' by winning dual-nationality case



Indonesia's Dean James vies for the ball with Australia's Aiden O'Neill during their World Cup 2026 Asian qualifier football match between Australia and Indonesia in Sydney on March 20, 2025.

The Hague, Netherlands

The KNVB Dutch football federation on Monday won a court case related to dual-national players that could have caused "chaos" had the decision gone the other way.

The KNVB had warned that it might have to replay 133 matches if NAC Breda had won their case, heard in an Utrecht court, against the federation over the eligibility of certain Dutch players who had switched international allegiance.

The Netherlands does not allow dual nationality outside of the European Union, and several players unwittingly gave up their Dutch nationality by opting to play for other countries, notably former colonies Indonesia, Suriname and Curacao.

Relegation-threatened Breda brought a case against the federation over a match they lost 6-0 in March to Go Ahead Eagles, who fielded Dean James, a defender born in the Netherlands but who switched international allegiance to Indonesia in March 2025.

That meant that he automatically gave up his Dutch nationality and needed a work permit to play and train in the Netherlands, which he did not have at the time. The KNVB had warned last week of potential "chaos" if it lost the case, with the possibility that it could not finish the championship.

"NAC's interests in being allowed to replay a match do not automatically outweigh the KNVB's interests in preventing potentially major problems when completing the Eredivisie competition," the Utrecht judge said in a ruling.

Had Breda won its case to replay the match, several other clubs could also have asked for the same outcome.

That could have meant up to 133 matches, according to the KNVB, being replayed across the top two men's divisions and the women's championship.

The KNVB said that would be impossible to organize. □





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Pistons rout Magic to cap comeback, book NBA playoff clash with Cavaliers

Los Angeles, United States

The Detroit Pistons routed the Orlando Magic 116-94 on Sunday to cap a remarkable NBA playoff comeback and book an Eastern Conference semi-final clash with Cleveland.

Cade Cunningham scored 32 points and handed out 12 assists and Tobias Harris added 30 points with nine rebounds as the Pistons, who trailed 3-1 in the best-of-seven series, wrapped up a 4-3 triumph.

In Cleveland, the Cavaliers weathered a hot start from Toronto to beat the Raptors 114-102 and secure a 4-3 win in a series in which the home team won every game.

The Pistons, who locked up the top seed in the East with the third-best record in the league, notched their first playoff series victory since 2008.

"It's great," Cunningham said after the Pistons became the 15th team to climb out of a 3-1 hole one day after the Philadelphia 76ers accomplished the



Daniss Jenkins #24, Cade Cunningham #2, Tobias Harris #12 and Ausar Thompson #9 of the Detroit Pistons celebrate a basket against Paolo Banchero #5 of the Orlando Magic during the second quarter in Game Seven of the First Round of the NBA Eastern Conference Playoffs at Little Caesars Arena on May 03, 2026 in Detroit, Michigan.

feat against Boston.

"We had a great regular season, we built a lot of momentum going into these playoffs," Cunningham said. "To lose in the first round would have really stung.

"To come back from 3-1, odds against us, and to come back and win it at home it feels good."

Detroit had already fended off elimination with victories in games five and six

against the Magic erasing a 24-point deficit on Friday to force Sunday's decider. It's the second time the Pistons have rallied from 3-1 down to top the Magic, having accomplished the feat in the first round in 2003.

"They really pushed us to the limit," Cunningham said. "We've grown a lot because of this series, because of that team."

Paolo Banchero scored 38 points with nine rebounds and six assists for Orlando but got precious little scoring support.

Banchero scored the Magic's first 11 points and Orlando emerged from a tight first quarter with a two-point lead.

The back-and-forth action continued early in the second, Detroit finally creating some separation behind a 17-point second-quarter outburst from Harris.

They led 60-49 at halftime and pushed their lead to as many as 25, taking full advantage of 16 Magic turnovers that led to 19 Pistons points.

"We're excited for what's to come," Cunningham said. "We want to win games, win series and (our) ultimate goal is a championship." That quest continues with game one against Cleveland on Tuesday. □

Mosley fired as coach after Magic's first-round NBA playoff exit



Head coach Jamahl Mosley of the Orlando Magic reacts against the Detroit Pistons during the fourth quarter in Game Seven of the First Round of the NBA Eastern Conference Playoffs at Little Caesars Arena on May 03, 2026 in Detroit, Michigan.

Washington, United States

Jamahl Mosley was fired as coach of the Orlando Magic on Monday, hours after the team was eliminated from the NBA playoffs with a blowout loss in Detroit. The top-seeded Pistons rallied from a 3-1 deficit in their best-of-seven Eastern Conference first round series to eliminate Orlando with a 116-94 triumph in game seven on Sunday.

The Magic was barely back in Florida before team president of basketball operations Jeff Weltman announced Mosley's dismissal.

"We're grateful to Jamahl for all he has done for the Orlando Magic," Weltman said. "We appreciate his leadership and the positive contributions he made as head coach.

"While this was a difficult decision, we feel it's time for a new voice and fresh perspective."

Mosley, 47, served as an assistant coach for Denver, Cleveland and Dallas before being hired by the Magic as head coach in July 2021.

His five seasons marked the longest tenure for any Magic coach since Stan Van Gundy, who guided Orlando to the 2009 NBA Finals, where they lost to the Los Angeles Lakers.

But the Magic have not won a playoff series since 2010, falling in the first round seven times and missing the playoffs nine times since then.

Under Mosley, the Magic went 189-221, including a 45-37 record this past campaign, and made the playoffs the past three seasons before making quick exits. □